CHAPTER-II
ABSENTEEISM: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND CONTROL MEASURES OF ABSENTEEISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION
Absenteeism is the term generally used to refer to unscheduled employee absences from the workplace. Many causes of absenteeism are legitimate, for example personal illness or family issues, but absenteeism also can often be traced to other factors such as a poor work environment or workers who are not committed to their jobs. If such absences become excessive, they can have a seriously adverse impact on a business's operations and, ultimately, its profitability.

It refers to workers absence from their regular task when he is normally schedule to work. The according to Webster’s dictionary —Absenteeism is the practice or habit of being an absentee and an absentee is one who habitually stays away from work. According to Labor Bureau of Shimla: Absenteeism is defined as the total man shifts lost because of absence as percentage of total number of man shifts scheduled to work. In other words, it signifies the absence of an employee from work when he is scheduled to be at work. Any employee may stay away from work if he has taken leave to which he is entitled or on ground of sickness or some accident or without any previous sanction of leave. Thus absence may be authorized or unauthorized, willful or caused by circumstances beyond one’s control.

2.1.1 Factors Influencing Absenteeism
Many teachers do absent themselves from school based on illness. Sometimes some sick teachers are forced to go to school even if sick as a result transmit communicable diseases to their co-teachers. This leads to even greater absenteeism and reduced productivity among other teachers who try to work while ill. Bullington (2002). Workforces often excuse absenteeism caused by medical reasons if the worker supplies a doctor's note or other form of documentation. There is however other absenteeism in which a teacher doesn't seek any excuse for not coming to school. School authorities and pupils do expect this teacher in school but they get to school to meet his/her absence. Others however seek permission from these authorizes for not coming to school.
According to Nelson and Quick (2008) people who are dissatisfied with their jobs are absent more frequently. They went on to say that the type of dissatisfaction that most often leads employees to miss work is: dissatisfaction with the work itself. In other cases, they are not satisfied with their salaries or poor motivation.

The psychological model that discusses this is the "withdrawal model", which assumes that absenteeism represents individual withdrawal from dissatisfying working conditions. This finds empirical support in a negative association between absence and job satisfaction, especially satisfaction with the work itself.

There are several determinants of job satisfaction. They include, among others, the relationship between an employee and the other employees, or the relationship between the employee and the supervisor or administration. When this relationship is enhanced and satisfying, job satisfaction follows. Compensation is also another determinant of job satisfaction. When the employee believes that he is sufficiently compensated, he will be happy at the job and hence be satisfied. The opposite is also true; if an employee feels that he is not been sufficiently compensated, then he will not be satisfied at the job.

The conditions under which the person is working will also determine the level of his job satisfaction. If the conditions are conducive, the employee will be satisfied. However, if the conditions are not conducive, for example in the case of hazardous working conditions, the employee will not be satisfied.

According to a report by Society for Human Resource Management SHRM (2009), there is a wide spread job dissatisfaction among workers of all cadre. The study did not find any difference between satisfaction levels of people from different income brackets or ages.

According to this study, the past ten years have seen an unprecedented decline in the level of job satisfaction across all income brackets.

For the past four decades, researches have consistently proved that a considerable number of teachers would quit the job and look for another one given the chance. This number ranges from 40-50% of all teachers interviewed SHRM (2009).

Researchers have identified different types of job satisfaction. There is what Burgoon (2009) refers to as extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction. The latter is when the employee takes into consideration the conditions of their work as a determinant off
their satisfaction. This can be viewed as been composed of Herzberg's hygiene factors. On the other hand, intrinsic job satisfaction is when the employee considers only the inherent attributes of the job, (like category, difficulty among others) as the determinants of his job satisfaction Kendall (2006).

Again, this can be equated to Herzberg's motivating factors of the level of satisfaction Rensis (2006). The questionnaire is divided into a long and short form. The former has 100 questions, five from each attribute of the job that is being measured. The latter has twenty questions, one for each of the attributes Kendall (2006).

Job Satisfaction Survey is a questionnaire with a total of thirty six questions. These questions are four for each of the nine attributes of the job that the researcher is interested in Kendall (2006). There is also the Faces Scale, where the workers are supposed to respond to only one item. They respond by picking a face for it Rensis (2006). This was one of the first scales to be used in measuring job satisfaction.

Many teachers stay far from their schools; however a source of transportation to their schools is usually a problem. This sometimes prevents teachers from coming to school. They may also stay at places where they have to travel for a long distance before they go for their salaries all these do make them absent themselves. Luthans and Kreitner (1985).

Teachers in rural areas most at times do not go to school because they are aware that no circuit supervisor will be able to easily get to the school since the place is far and the road is also not good. Based on this, the teachers choose not to go to school. Teachers equally give other excuses such as funeral, rain and not having money to fare him/herself. Lai and Chan (2000).

Scott and McClellan (1990) write that the class level one teaches and the level of qualification was two primary predictors of teacher absences. Through their investigation, it was discovered that the higher the degree obtained by the teacher, the higher the number of days they were absent from the classroom.

Also nonprofessional teachers turn to miss school most, since they lack interest in the job. They turn to use the teaching profession as a stepping stone in life. Nonprofessional teachers will always say _I chose to teach but if I get a better job I will leave Blau (1985). Absenteeism can be defined as any failure of an employee to report for or to remain at work as scheduled, regardless of the reason Ivatts (2010).
According to Abeles (2009) absenteeism is a period of not attending to duty by the employees while for teachers it is being in school but fail to visit class to teach or being in unfit condition to teach the children effectively Castrol (2007). Research has shown that teacher absenteeism is a global phenomenon facing developing countries more than the developed ones. In developing countries, the teacher absenteeism rate is above 40% while in developed countries it is as low as 10% Hubbell (2008). According to Ivatts (2010) literature on teacher absenteeism is scarce and very few reasonable findings have been established on the causes. To begin to fill those gaps on the causes of teacher absenteeism World Bank in collaboration with Global Development Network initiated a multi-country survey on basic health and education Chaudhury, et al. (2004). On education the survey focused on absence rate of primary school teachers and obtained the data.

**Table2.1.1: Teacher Absenteeism Rate by Country**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Teacher absence rate (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Zambia</td>
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<td>Indonesia</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
<td>27</td>
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The same survey was done for secondary school teachers inclusive of Mongolia and Lao PDR Cambodia. In 2008, the survey was repeated for Uganda and Indonesia. The
survey data obtained indicated that teachers’ absenteeism for developed countries was found to be quite high averaging 19% for primary school teachers Chaudhury, et al. (2006) while Peru registered the smallest absence rate of 11%.

According to the survey, the national average absence rate for secondary school teachers was lower than that of primary school teachers except for Bangladesh where the rate of absenteeism for secondary school teachers was 2% higher than the primary rate World Bank (2004). In Mongolia teacher absence rate in rural areas was 16% and only 5% in urban areas Glewwe & Kremer (2006). In India, absenteeism rate for the teachers was 25% with Jharkhand, one of its states registering 42% Kremer, et.al. (2005). This was the first National teacher absence data produced for South American countries Chaudhury, et al. (2004). According to Das, et al. (2006) teachers in public schools in Pakistan are absent 3.2 days per month compared to their private school counterparts who are absent only 1.8 days per month.

There has been a few studies conducted on teacher absenteeism in developing countries and more so in African countries. However according to a study carried out in Botswana, Malawi and Uganda, it was found that teachers absenteeism rate varies from 3 to 6% in primary schools with Botswana showing the highest rate of 6%. In secondary schools, the rate varies from 3 to 11% with Uganda showing the highest rate of 11%. Das, et al. (2005), established that teacher absenteeism rate in Zambia was 18%. A recent survey by Uwezo in Tanzania indicated that teacher absenteeism was a major obstacle for effective and sustainable implementation of the country’s education system where the absenteeism rate was 10% at the primary and 13% at the secondary schools. Another survey by African Economic Research Consortium’s service delivery indicators found that teachers absenteeism rate in Tanzania was 23% in primary schools.

According to Ivatt (2010) poor motivation, lack of accountability, personal illness, family matters, training programs and job dissatisfaction are some of the causes of the high level absenteeism of teachers in many African Countries although the evidence provided is weak. Research by the Glewwe & Kremer (2006) found that teachers’ absenteeism in Zambia and Kenya was dominated by legitimate reasons but unauthorized absenteeism was common in many other African countries. It was also established that in Ghana and Zambia a third of all primary school teachers were
absent due to poor motivation where many primary school teachers wanted to be upgraded to become secondary school teachers whose motivation level is higher. In Tanzania, teacher absenteeism was reported to be lower in private schools than in public schools and the rate was higher among the contract teachers, than those with permanent status Crocetti, et al. (2014).

Glewwe & Kremer (2006) established that, teacher absenteeism in Kenya varies from one region to another where the rate ranges from 20% to 28.4% of the time. He also argued that 12.4% of teachers were in school but not in the class teaching. While teacher absenteeism is a serious obstacle to the provision of quality education in Kenya, there is little systematic data on its extent. This study therefore seeks to establish actual data on teacher absenteeism in Kenya and in particular Nzaui Sub County.

According to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) county director’s speech during the county educational day in 2013 at Wote stadium, Makueni County, teacher absenteeism is the key factor leading to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in the county.

While presenting assessments report to the principals in 2013, the sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officer confirmed that absenteeism of school principals in term 2, 2013 was at an alarming rate in Nzaui Sub County. In response to the report, the principal Kalamba secondary school observed that in his school the rate of teacher absenteeism was 32% during the June/July 2013 teacher’s strike.

In regard to the current study there are limited findings on teacher absenteeism in developing countries and the little that is known is confined to particular regions only. Further, the administrative records of teacher absenteeism may not be accurate. There are also several missing links on the causes of teacher absenteeism, where investigation focused on excessive absence only and mitigation measure to combat the unauthorized absenteeism have been ignored. This study will attempt to fill these gaps in relationship to the Kenyan situations and in particular Nzaui Sub-County.

Ivatts (2010) found that there are several causes of teacher absenteeism which vary from one country to another and from one region to another. These causes include
teacher demography, gender, seniority, type of employment, type of school, job satisfaction, professional commitment, school and institutional management, weak monitoring systems, incentives and sanctions, educational administration, recording and reporting procedures, health, secondary employment, class size, quality of school infrastructure, distance to school, isolation, level of training, formal duties, quality of learning environment, social contest of the school, community social economic status, school leadership and community participation. This study will discuss these causes under 3 main headings, 2.3 personal factors, 2.4 school factors and 2.5 environmental factors.

2.1.2 Strategies to Curb the Absenteeism

1. High collaborative culture.
2. Be aware of problems that may affect employee attendance or performance.
3. Develop open communication between managers, supervisors and employees.
4. Employees are encouraged to voice their concerns so their perceptions of the work place are clear.
5. Cooperation with union representatives can be very helpful in attendance management and should be encouraged.
6. Regularly scheduled department meetings are an excellent way not only to hear employee perceptions and concerns but also to communicate organizational goals.
7. An employee's relationship with their supervisor can greatly influence their feelings about their work, their coworkers and thus their attendance at work.
8. More openness and transparency on the part of management.
9. Encourage risk taking and experimentation among members.
10. Make each employee aware that they are a valued member of the "team", that they play an important role in your organization and that their attendance is critical.
11. Hold regular meetings; keep your staff informed and involved.
12. Know your employees; without prying show an interest in their personal lives.
13. Familiarize with community programs which you can recommend to an employee if he/she has a need for assistance (i.e. marital or financial counseling).
14. Awareness, commitment and involvement by all levels of staff.
15. Match the attendance records during a period of "high" workload to a period of "normal" workload.

16. Bonus for unused sick leave.

17. Official warnings.

18. Develop a comprehensive and collaborative continuous improvement program throughout the department.

19. Counsel individual employees. Discuss with all employees problems of unjustifiable time off.

20. Bonus work (e.g. Saturday) should not be available to any worker who has been absent during the week.

21. Introduce an incentive scheme to reward those who don't have an absent day. This is measured quarterly and annually.

22. Greater attention by supervisors and more accountability of operations management and other management has improved sick leave.

23. Front line management will be held accountable for attendance management performance.

24. A management structure be engineered to identify and execute objectives relating to absence prevention, disability management and attendance control.

25. Effective training and development program.

26. Effective career planning and development program.

27. Each worksite should develop and maintain an attendance management policy. Employers should track attendance and assign costs based on reliable data. The Attendance Management Team should be given the ability to develop complex case management strategies and aggressively intervene where appropriate. Employees should be encouraged to give as much notice as possible for anticipated absences. Absent employees should be requested to keep contact with their employer.

28. The employer should be informed of any changes in the employee's health status. Employees should be called if they are not keeping contact with the employer. The purpose is to show concern and desire for the employee to regain a healthy status and return to work.
29. In addition to individual counseling make use of family counseling methods. It is reported that these strategies got effective feedback from the employees and employer's part in order to curb the absenteeism. It is reported that the rate of absenteeism reduced from 34% to 20% within a period of 6-10 months. The requirement here is the committed management force with single task to carry forward this strategic function with fidelity and accuracy. Many strategies like community intervention programs and industrial counseling strategies have major impact on the behavior of absented employees. It is envisaged that a culture of open communication and collaboration can reduce the level of absenteeism through strategic interventions.

30. Absenteeism is the term generally used to pass on to rash employee absences from the workplace. Many causes of absenteeism are legal personal illness or family issues for example but absenteeism also can often be traced to other factors such as a reduced work environment or workers who are not devoted to their jobs. If such absences become extreme they can have a critically adverse crash on a business's operations and finally its success.

31. A three part model of organizational commitment was used to study job removal intentions proceeds and absenteeism. Affective commitment emerged as the most reliable analyst of these result variables and was the only view of commitment related to turnover and to absenteeism. In difference normative commitment was linked only to removal intentions while no direct belongings for maintenance obligation were experiential. Resolution commitment however interacts with emotional commitment in predicting job removal intentions and absenteeism. The form of the interaction was such that high sunk costs tempered contact between moving commitment and the associated outcome variables. Recent thinking about top management has been unfair by alternative models of man. Economic approaches to governance such as agency theory tend to believe some form of homo-economics, which show subordinates as strange opportunistic and self-serving. Alternatively sociological and psychological approaches to control such as stewardship theory describe subordinates as collectivists pro-organizational and dependable. Through this research we effort to settle the difference between these
assumptions by proposing a model based upon the subordinate's psychological attributes and the organization's situational personality.

**Absenteeism Measure**

Absence measurement is necessary in order for management to evaluate between person absence and departmental absences. Measuring absence is serious to recognize the different patterns of employee absence and aim the variables moving it. There are different ways to calculate absenteeism the most typically used is the lost time rate formula and the person frequency formula.

Absenteism rate = Number of Man days lost *100

Individual frequency = number of absent employees/average number of employees*100

Boundaries do live when trying to measure absenteeism whether with data compilation or data appropriateness thus managers should be attentive to stay on top of such limitations and grip them with mind and rightness.

In addition to ensuring that work is suitably enclosed during the employee's absence there are a number of grave proceedings that supervisors need to take to manage absenteeism, they should: assurance that all employees are fully conscious of the organization's policies and events for trade with absence be the first point of make get in touch with when an employee phones in poor health, preserve suitably full accreted up to date absence report for their staff recognize any patterns or trends of absence which reason anxiety behavior return to work interviews and apply punitive procedures where necessary.

Looking at reasons for unscheduled absence the CCH survey found only 34 percent were for individual illness but more than two out of three 66% were for other reasons including family issues 22% personal needs 18% right attitude 13% and workplace demands said Wolf. Another key finding of the review was how important employee confidence was in the workplace. The survey identified a strong link between employee morale and absenteeism. "For example, twice as many employers with poor or fair morale view absenteeism as a serious problem (44%), in contrast with 21 percent of employers whose firm has employees with good or very good morale," said Wolf. Not surprisingly, absenteeism is higher in companies where morale is low. In 2007, the higher rate was 2.7 percent, and the average was 2.3 percent. The future of a
company's absenteeism is also conditioned by employee morale. The survey found one in three companies (36%) with low or poor employee morale expected an increase of absenteeism in the next two years, whereas only 19 percent of firms with good morale expected such an increase.

2.2 THE CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM

The causes of absenteeism are many and include:

- Serious Accidents and Illness
- Bullying & harassment
- Childcare & Eldercare
- Depression
- Disengagement
- Illness
- Injuries
- Job hunting
- Partial shift
- Health
- Work home balance
- Economic Health
- Self-Treated Sickness
- Medically Certified Sickness
- Conference/School Activities
- Funeral / Death in family
- Maternity leave
- Sick family member leave
- Stress & Low Morale
- Poor Working Conditions
- Boredom on the Job
- Lack of Job Satisfaction
- Inadequate Leadership and Poor Supervision
- Personal problems (financial, marital, substance abuse, child care, etc.)
- Poor Physical Fitness
Transportation Problems

Workload

The rate of the absenteeism in Indian industries is very high and cannot be dismissed. A statistical study of absenteeism of Indian labor observed that, the basic cause of absenteeism in India is that industrial worker is still part-time peasant. Thus the workers go to find jobs at cities after the harvesting their crops. It means that when the transplanting season. These workers consider to the modern industrialism is insecure. Thus, cause to high rate of the absenteeism in the industrial sector. According to the Labor Investigation Committee (1946), there were many reasons that caused the absenteeism of the industrial workers. The Commission pointed out many factors which caused the absenteeism in Indian industries. These factors are:

Sickness and Low Vitality: The committee pointed out that sickness is most important responsible for absenteeism in almost of the in Industrial sector. Epidemics like cholera, small-pox and malaria always break out in severe from in most industrial areas. The low vitality of the Indian workers makes them easy prey to such epidemics and bad housing and unsanitary conditions of living aggravate the trouble. However, the Commission has been noticed that the rate of absenteeism among the female workers is higher than their male counterparts.

Means of Transport: The Commission also stated that the transport facilities also play very important to contribute the absenteeism of the worker in the industries. It has been pointed out that, the rate of absenteeism is higher in those factories where transport facilities are not easily available as compared to those where such facilities are easily available or provided by the factory itself.

Hours of work: The long hours of work also affect the workers’ efficiency and consequently their sickness rate and absenteeism rate are increased.

Nightshift: It has also been pointed out that there is a greater percentage of absenteeism during the nightshifts than in the dayshifts, owing to the greater discomforts of work during the night-time.

Rural exodus: The committee also pointed out that probably the most predominant cause of absenteeism is the frequent urge of rural exodus. It has been noticed that the workers go back to their villages at the time of harvesting and sowing the crops. It increases the rate of absenteeism in factories.
**Accident:** Industrial accident depends upon the nature of work to be performed by the worker and his ability for doing that work. In case of hazardous nature of job, the accidents occur more frequently which lead to higher rate of absenteeism.

**Social and religious Function:** it has been noticed that workers become absent form their duty on occasions of social and religious functions. Since the workers like to join their families on such occasions, they go back to their villages for like to join short periods. **Drinking and amusement:** the Labor Investigation committee pointed out that drinking and amusements are also responsible for absenteeism. Since drinking and amusements in the late hours of night make it difficult for the workers to reach in time on their duties. They like to become absent rather than late since they know that badly workers will be substituted for them, if they are late.

**After Pay-Day:** the Labor Investigation committee also noted the level of absenteeism is comparatively high immediately after the pay-day because they get their wages, they feel like having a good time or return to their villages to make purchases for the family and to meet them, so the absenteeism is high after they got paid.

**Nature of work:** the absenteeism rate is also affected by the nature of work. According to Prof. William pointed out that absenteeism prevails because workers are not accustomed to the factory life and factory discipline. In other words, absenteeism prevails because the nature of work in factories is different from that for which the worker is accustomed. So when they come to work in the factory, they feel strange, this new situation make them uncomfortable, so lead to high rate of absenteeism of the industrial workers.

**Other causes:** The above factor which are caused the absenteeism in the Industrial which are pointed out briefly by the Labor Commission. However, there can be two other factors which caused the absenteeism in industrial sector. These factors are: a) personal Factors and b) workplace factors.

**2.2.1 Personal Factors Influencing Teacher Absenteeism**

Research data available shows that personal characteristics influence teacher absenteeism. They include age and gender of the teacher, illness of the teacher or a family member, experience and job dissatisfaction of the teacher, seniority and the type of employment for the teacher; qualification and lack of professional
competence of the teacher, compassionate leave and family conflicts among other family responsibilities.

Research has established that teachers join the teaching profession when they are highly motivated but they „burnout” as the age of the teacher increases Glewwe &Kremer (2006). This explains why older teachers are often more absent. According to Ervasti, et al. (2012), female teachers are absent more frequently than male teachers due to more family demanding responsibilities.

According to Chaudhury, et al. (2006) the study on multi-country survey indicates that 10% of the teachers” absenteeism is attributed to illness. In Uganda and Zanzibar HIV infection was found to be responsible for the largest share of teachers absenteeism Habayarima, et al. (2004). Researchers observation on the teachers absenteeism indicate that teachers who are sick or have sick family members will not attend educational institutes but stay at home to recover or to take care of the sick person.

World Bank report (2004), revealed that during the first year of teaching, teachers tend to be effective but after two to three years of experience, the teachers become more effective and their attendance is good. However the survey report done among many school administrators indicates that newly employed teacher’s absence rate is low compared to the long serving teachers. According to Sargent & Hannum (2005) when teachers lack job satisfaction the rate of absenteeism increases. Alcarliar, etal. (2004) argue that contract teachers in Peru and Indonesia have higher rates of absenteeism because they spend more time exploring alternative employment. Researchers” observation is that an employee who has good terms of payment and service will have low absenteeism rate.

2.2.2 Institutional Factors Influencing Teacher Absenteeism

Institutional characteristics and working conditions that in different ways influence teacher’s absenteeism. They include: Lack of group accepted norms, poor leadership style of the principal, lack of effective supervision and monitoring policies by the administration and Ministry of Education, the status of the institutes whether private or public, poor infrastructure and equipment’s, lack of in-service training programs among other motivation policies, high pupil-teacher ratio and assignment of other administrative duties.
According to Ehrenberg, et al (1991) great organizational support can cause low absence rate of the individual teachers because it reduces stress. Institutes that lack strong staff welfare will have higher absenteeism rate of teachers. This is because there is no teamwork and some social needs are not met and this demotivates teachers. Educational institutes where the principal’s leadership style does not involve teachers in decision making, that which does not allow teachers to participate in policy making demotivates them hence increasing rate of absenteeism. In his quasi experiment, Rockoff (2008) in New York City found that monitoring program reduce teacher’s absenteeism, and improve retention. In Rajasthan province of India, teachers attendance improved when cameras to monitor attendance were introduced Duflo & Hanna (2005) while in North Carolina teachers attendance improved when a policy to charge for each day they took off was introduced. Multi-country survey report by Glewwe &Kremer (2006) found that monitoring of teachers by school directors accompanied by disciplinary action reduce teachers absenteeism by a high rate.

2.2.3 Environmental Factors Influencing Teacher Absenteeism

Environmental factors are community based characteristics that in different ways contribute to teacher’s absenteeism. Some examples include the location of the educational institutes, residence of the teacher, remoteness of the educational institutes, level of poverty of the community, assignment of non-teaching tasks to the teachers, education level of the parents, political influence and weather conditions.

In Ecuador, it was observed that teachers working in rural areas were less absent than their urban counterparts who are deterred by the good infrastructure in urban centers. According to multi- country survey World Bank (2004) many governments pay teachers a bonus, addition housing or transport allowance for locating in less desirable schools. In Kenya, this is called hardship allowance and is paid to the teachers teaching in hardship areas, such as arid and semi-arid regions. This study will try to establish whether this hardship allowance has effect on teacher absenteeism in Nzau Sub County.

According to Chaudhury, et al. (2004) teachers are more absent on Fridays and Mondays when they go early to start long weekend and when they are late due to weekend activities. In addition, teachers from remote areas have increased
absenteeism rate because they cannot reach the school on time due to poor transport and again they travel far to urban centers where they can access services such as banking and sometimes they extend weekends and holidays. According to Abeles (2009) teachers from communities, which are poor, have high rate of absenteeism because the community lacks supervision and monitoring ability of the teachers. On the other hand, common practice is that poor communities have no vibrant activities to reduce the teacher absenteeism.

Many organizations find teachers knowledgeable, available and committed in performing public tasks in the community. For this reason, many organizations will deploy teachers when there are such tasks making them stay out of classrooms. Alcazar, et al. (2004) observes that teachers having a local origin have lower absenteeism rate than those from other communities. According to Hubbell (2008) indigenous teachers tend to be more absent than the non-indigenous teachers. This is because the indigenous teachers being near home have many personal activities that require their attention from time to time compared to non-indigenous teachers who are far from their home. According to Rogers, et al. (2004) in Ecuador, teachers strike in 2003, lasted for six weeks influencing teachers absenteeism for the same period. Wars and other civil disorders can cause teacher absenteeism.

The purpose of this study was to establish the interrelationship between interdependent, intervening and dependent variables

**Personal Factor**

**Personal Attitude:** there are different attitude of employees. The Employees with strong workplace ethics will respect their work and appreciate the contribution they make to their companies. Such employees will not engage themselves in taking unscheduled off. On the other hand, employees with very low or no work ethics are indiscipline and have lot of integrity and behavioral issues. Since, they feel no obligation towards the company, absenteeism comes easily to them.

- **Age:** The younger employees are often restless. They want to spend time with their friends and have fun, rather than being tied down with work responsibility. This lack of ownership often leads them to take unauthorized time off. With age, people gain experience and maturity, which makes them focused and responsible. Their approach is rather professional and they prefer
to stick to their chairs to get the work done. If ever they are found absent, then it could be due to sickness.

- **Seniority**: Employees, who have been with the company for a long time are well-adjusted with the working culture and the job, therefore, they find no reason to be absent without permission. On the other hand, new hires are more prone to taking ad hoc breaks to unwind themselves.

- **Gender**: Women generally do a balancing act by shuffling their time between home and work. Family, being their foremost priority, they don't think twice before taking a step towards absenteeism.

- **Workplace Factors Stress**: The pressure at work sometimes takes a toll on the employees. This results in increased levels of stress. The employees then resort to excuses that can help them stay away from work.

- **Work Routine**: Doing the same job over a period of time can get monotonous. The employees find the job functions boring. They rather choose time off to do something interesting than come to work.

- **Job Satisfaction**: If employees do not find their job challenging, dissatisfaction creeps in. That leads to more absenteeism in the workplace. Workers like to join their families on such occasions, they go back to their villages for like to join short periods

- **Drinking and amusement**: The Labour Investigation committee pointed out that drinking and amusements are also responsible for absenteeism. Since drinking and amusements in the late hours of night make it difficult for the workers to reach in time on their duties. They like to become absent rather than late since they know that badly workers will be substituted for them, if they are late.

- **After Pay-Day**: The Labor Investigation committee also noted the level of absenteeism is comparatively high immediately after the pay-day because they get their wages, they feel like having a good time or return to their villages to make purchases for the family and to meet them, so the absenteeism is high after they got paid.

- **Nature of work**: The absenteeism rate is also affected by the nature of work. According to Prof. William pointed out that absenteeism prevails because
workers are not accustomed to the factory life and factory discipline. In other words, absenteeism prevails because the nature of work in factories is different from that for which the worker is accustomed. So when they come to work in the factory, they feel strange, this new situation make them uncomfortable, so lead to high rate of absenteeism of the industrial workers.

- **Bullying and harassment** - Employees who are bullied and harrased by coworkers and/or bosses are more likely to call in sick to avoid the situation

- **Stress and Low Morale** - Heavy workloads, stressful meetings/presentations and feelings of being unappreciated can cause employees to avoid going into work. Personal stress (outside of work) can lead to absenteeism.

- **Childcare and eldercare** - Employees may be forced to miss work in order to stay home and take care of a child/elder when normal arrangements have fallen through (for example, a sick caregiver or a snow day at school) or if a child/elder is sick.

- **Depression** - According to the leading cause of absenteeism in the United States is depression. Depression can lead to substance abuse if people turn to drugs or alcohol to self-medicate their pain or anxiety.

- **Disengagement** - Employees who are not committed to their jobs, coworkers and/or the company are more likely to miss work simply because they have no motivation to go.

- **Illness** - Injuries, illness and medical appointments are the most commonly reported reasons for missing work (though not always the actual reason). Not surprisingly, each year during the cold and flu season, there is a dramatic spike in absenteeism rates for both full-time and part-time employees.

- **Injuries** - Accidents can occur on the job or outside of work, resulting in absences. In addition to acute injuries, chronic injuries such as back and neck problems are a common cause of absenteeism.

- **Job hunting** – It is the act of looking for employment, due to unemployment, discontent with a current position, or a desire for a better position. The immediate goal of job seeking is usually to obtain a job interview with an employer which may lead to getting hired. The job hunter or seeker typically first looks for job vacancies or employment opportunities.
• **Partial shifts** - Arriving late, leaving early and taking longer breaks than allowed are considered forms of absenteeism and can affect productivity and workplace morale

• **Maternity leave** - A period of absence from work granted to a mother before and after the birth of her child.

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study presents psychological and sociological frameworks that were developed to explain employee absenteeism in general and teacher absenteeism in particular. It focuses on teacher absenteeism in the context of secondary schools in Makueni County. The study further embraces theory X and theory Y, which was developed by Douglas Mc Gregorin. In the X theory, management assumes employees are lazy, avoid work, avoid responsibility, seek to be lead and place security above all things. As a result, management believes that workers need to be closely supervised and compressive systems of control developed.

The psychological and sociological frameworks were developed in 1970s and 1980s captures two sets of factors. The first set is employee values, expectations and satisfactions. The second set is related to social interaction and social norms within the employee’s organization. Although the framework tends to explain why an employee will be absent from work, it ignores other variables like demographic characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, teachers residence and poverty which are seen as having indirect effect on absenteeism.

#### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework as represented by figure, the key factors influencing teacher absenteeism referred to as independent variables are indicated. Mitigation measures to reduce the vice referred to as intervening variables are stated. Teachers’ absenteeism referred to as the dependent variables ends the interrelationship of the variables.

**Teacher Level Variables**

According to this study, the teacher level variables can be referred to as personal factors. They include teacher demographic variables such as age, gender, education level ethnicity and teacher school related variables such as satisfaction of work profession among others. **Sargent & Hannum (2005)** observed that personal
variables have direct effect on teacher absenteeism. They showed existing link where older, female and less qualified teachers were more satisfied with their job than young, male and qualified teachers.

**The institutional Level Variables**

In regards to the study, the variables are factors, which operate within the institutes and they include work group norms, the principal’s leadership style, supervision from local and state authority, partnership between the colleges and community, time for teachers” training and administrative duties. These variables have only direct effect on teachers” absenteeism.

**Contextual – Level Variables**

These variables are geographically oriented. According to this study, they can be referred to as community characteristics or the environmental factors. They include location of the educational institutes whether it is rural or urban, the remoteness of the institutes in relationship to tarmac ked road and the level of poverty in the community Bradley, et al. (2006). According to Sargent & Hannum (2005) teachers in poor or rural schools have been noted to have lower level of job satisfaction and hence more absent than their counterparts in the non – poor and sub – urban schools.
Diagrammatic representations of the interrelated study variables
Source: Researcher’s Design

2.4 Consequences of Absenteeism
Academic organization represent knowledge economy for any society and its importance has been recognized worldwide. All developed countries are spending a major part of their budget on education. Within education system of any country, teachers have vital position, as the success of educational institutions is mostly dependent on teachers, who educate the most valued assets of country, i.e. students; therefore the teachers’ performance is fundamental concern of all educational institutions.
2.4.1 Impact on Individual Productivity

Absenteeism can affect individual productivity. Simply put, if someone works less, they're likely to be less productive. Employers should consider root causes, which include burnout, disengagement, as well as those that may require accommodations, such as child care or illness. Organizations should address these issues immediately. If an employee is frequently "checked out," it could be a sign of low morale and engagement and a lack of passion for their work.

2.4.2 Impact on Team Performance

As missed work time increases, employees in the office are left making up for the work not performed by employees who are absent. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), overtime is used to cover 47 percent of employee absences and co-workers are perceived to be 29.5 percent less productive when covering for absent employees.

Even supervisor productivity is impacted. According to SHRM, supervisors spend more than four hours per week dealing with absences and preparing for/adjusting workflow to keep things moving. In other words, one of the biggest negative impacts of absenteeism on the employee experience is the added workload that colleagues must take on for employees who are absent.

2.4.3 Impact on Profits

Absenteeism can reduce profit margins in two ways.

- First, increased costs reduce profit margins unless revenues increase. For example, if organizations are spending more money on overtime pay and contract workers, direct costs go up and profit margins are likely to shrink.
- Second, absenteeism can decrease revenue if employees with specific roles aren't present. Employees who sell services or build and deliver a product — such as workers in manufacturing, software engineering, consulting or sales simply have less time to hit their goals when absent, potentially decreasing revenue.
Absenteeism interrupts the learning process. The educational system is founded on the assumption that students will attend school Balfanz & Byrnes (2012). For example, in Turkey students in upper secondary education are obliged to attend according to the Ministry of Education Secondary Education Institutions, Article 40, Passing and Exam Regulation. Student’s success depends on complete participation in all classes. As seen, legal texts support this assumption.

Direct and indirect costs of absenteeism are extremely high to the individuals, schools, families and communities. First of all, absenteeism in school negatively affects student learning experience and academic achievement. Absenteeism reduces the success because students miss their education time. This also results in loss of other students’ time since teachers must use additional time to compensate, which leads to lost teaching time for all students Rood (1989); Williams (2001); Eastman, Cooney, O'Connor & Small (2007).

Moreover, as absenteeism increases, students are inclined to experience psychological problems such as depression or behavioral disorders. They may also exhibit behavioral patterns such as becoming involved in violence inside and outside of the school, teenage pregnancy, quitting school and acquiring harmful habits Sinha (2007). In other words, absenteeism for young people is considered as a predictor of academic failure and leads to many other risk factors. If no measures are taken, absenteeism may be the beginning of a process ranging from academic failure to dropping out of school.

2.5 Guidelines for Absenteeism Control

There are two types of absenteeism, each of which requires a different type of approach.

1. Innocent Absenteeism

Innocent absenteeism refers to employees who are absent for reasons beyond their control; like sickness and injury. Innocent absenteeism is not culpable which means that it is blameless. In a labour relations context this means that it cannot be remedied or treated by disciplinary measures.

2. Culpable Absenteeism

Culpable absenteeism refers to employees who are absent without authorization for reasons which are within their control. For instance, an employee who is on sick leave
even though he/she is not sick, and it can be proven that the employee was not sick, is guilty of culpable absenteeism. To be culpable is to be blameworthy. In a labour relations context this means that progressive discipline can be applied. For the large majority of employees, absenteeism is legitimate, innocent absenteeism which occurs infrequently. Procedures for disciplinary action apply only to culpable absenteeism. Many organizations take the view that through the process of individual absentee counselling and treatment, the majority of employees will overcome their problems and return to an acceptable level of regular attendance.

3. Identifying Excessive Absenteeism

Attendance records should be reviewed regularly to be sure that an employee's sick-leave days are excessive compared to other employees. If a supervisor suspects that an employee is excessively absent, this can be confirmed through reviewing the attendance records. If all indications show that an employee is excessively absent, the next step is to gather as much information as possible in order to get a clearer picture of the situation. The employees' files should be reviewed and the employees' immediate supervisor should document all available information on the particular employee's history.

4. Individual Communication

After all available information has been gathered, the administrator or supervisor should individually meet with each employee whom has been identified as having higher than average or questionable (or pattern) absences. This first meeting should be used to bring concerns regarding attendance to the employee's attention. It is also an opportunity to discuss with the employee, in some depth, the causes of his or her attendance problem and possible steps he or she can take to remedy or control the absences. Listen carefully to the employee's responses.

The tone of the meeting should not be adversarial, but a major purpose of the interview is to let the employee know that management treats attendance as a very important component of overall work performance. Keep your comments non-threatening and work-oriented. Stick to the facts (i.e. patterns, profiles, rates etc.). The employee should be given a copy of their attendance report with absences highlighted for discussion.
This interview will give you the opportunity to explore in depth with the employee the reasons for his or her absence. Gather facts - do not make any assumptions. Provide support and counselling and offer guidance as the occasion demands to assist the employee to deal with the specific cause of the absence. Often, after the initial meeting employees reduce their absenteeism. The meeting shows that you are concerned and that absenteeism is taken seriously. The employee's attendance should be closely monitored until it has been reduced to acceptable levels. Appropriate counselling should take place as is thought necessary. If a marked improvement has been shown, commend the employee. The meeting should be documented and a copy placed in the employee's file.

5. Proof of Illness

Sometimes it is helpful in counselling employees with excessive innocent or culpable absenteeism to inquire or verify the nature and reasons of their absence. The extent to which an employer may inquire into the nature of and reasons for an employee's absence from the workplace is a delicate issue. The concepts of an employee's privacy and an employer's need for information affecting the workplace often come into conflict. Seldom is the conflict more difficult to resolve than where personal medical information is involved. Unions will often strongly object to any efforts by management to inquire more deeply into the nature of an employee's illness. You will need to consider the restraints of any language in collective agreements in relation to this issue. Generally speaking, however, the following "rules of thumb" can be derived from the existing jurisprudence:

1. There is a prevailing right to privacy on the part of an employee unless the employer can demonstrate that its legitimate business interests necessitate some intrusion into the employee's personal affairs.

2. When such intrusion is justified it should be strictly limited to the degree of intrusion necessitated by the employer's interests.

3. An employee has a duty to notify his employer of an intended absence, the cause of the absence and its expected duration. This information is required by the employer to meet its legitimate concerns to have at its disposal facts which will enable it to schedule work and organize its operation.
4. An absent employee has an obligation to provide his employer with information regarding any change to his condition or circumstances relating to it which may affect the employer's needs as described in item #3 above. As such, the interests of the employer in having this information outweigh the individual employee's right to privacy.

5. An employer rule requiring proof for every absence is unreasonable if an absenteeism problem does not exist.

6. A mere assertion by the person claiming to be sick is not satisfactory proof.

7. The obligation to prove sickness, where the employer requires proof, rests with the employee.

8. An employer is entitled upon reasonable and probable grounds to refuse to accept a physician's certificate until it contains sufficient information to satisfy the employer's reservations. (i.e. seen by physician, some indication of return to work, etc.). Non-production of a required medical certificate could result in loss of pay until the certificate is produced.

9. Where a medical certificate is rejected by an employer (as in #8 above) the employer must state the grounds for rejection and must point out to the employee what it requires to satisfy the onus of proof.

10. An employer may require an employee to prove fitness for work where it has reasonable grounds to do so. In a health care setting the nature of the employer's business gives it a reasonably irresistible interest in this personal information for the purpose of assessing fitness.

11. Where any unusual circumstances raise reasonable suspicion that an employee might have committed an abuse of an income protection program an employer may require an employee to explain such circumstances. For example, an employer may require responses as to whether the illness confined an employee to his/her bed or home; whether an employee engaged in any outside activity and the reasons for the activity.

6. After the Initial Interview
If after the initial interview, enough time and counselling efforts, as appropriate, have passed and the employee's absenteeism has not improved, it may be necessary to take
further action. Further action must be handled with extreme caution - a mistake in approach, timing or severity can be crippling from both an administration and labour relation's point of view.

Determining whether counselling or disciplinary action is appropriate, depends on whether the employee's absences are innocent or culpable. If the employee's absenteeism is made up of both innocent and culpable absences, then each type must be dealt with as a separate issue. In a labour relation's context innocent absenteeism and culpable absenteeism are mutually exclusive. One in no way affects the other.

7. Counseling Innocent Absenteeism

Innocent absenteeism is not blameworthy and therefore disciplinary action is not justified. It is obviously unfair to punish someone for conduct which is beyond his/her control. Absenteeism, no matter what the cause, imposes losses on the employer who is also not at fault. The damage suffered by the employer must be weighed against the employee's right to be sick. There is a point at which the employer's right to expect the employee to attend regularly and fulfil the employment contract will outweigh the employee's right to be sick. At such a point the termination of the employee may be justified, as will be discussed.

The procedure an employer may take for innocent absenteeism is as follows:

1. Initial counseling(s)
2. Written counseling(s)
3. Reduction(s) of hours and/or job reclassification
4. Discharge

1. Initial Counselling

Presuming you have communicated attendance expectations generally and have already identified an employee as a problem, you will have met with him or her as part of your attendance program and you should now continue to monitor the effect of these efforts on his or her attendance.

If the absences are intermittent, meet with the employee each time he/she returns to work. If absence is prolonged, keep in touch with the employee regularly and stay updated on the status of his/her condition. (Indicate your willingness to assist.)
You may require the employee to provide you with regular medical assessments. This will enable you to judge whether or not there is any livelihood of the employee providing regular attendance in future. Regular medical assessments will also give you an idea of what steps the employee is taking to seek medical or other assistance. Formal meetings in which verbal warnings are given should be given as appropriate and documented. If no improvement occurs written warning may be necessary.

2. Written Counselling

If the absences persist, you should meet with the employee formally and provide him/her with a letter of concern. If the absenteeism still continues to persist then the employee should be given a second letter of concern during another formal meeting. This letter would be stronger worded in that it would warn the employee that unless attendance improves, termination may be necessary.

3. Reduction(s) of hours and or job reclassification

In between the first and second letters the employee may be given the option to reduce his/her hours to better fit his/her personal circumstances. This option must be voluntarily accepted by the employee and cannot be offered as an ultimatum, as a reduction in hours is a reduction in pay and therefore can be looked upon as discipline.

If the nature of the illness or injury is such that the employee is unable to fulfill the requirements of his/her job, but could for example benefit from modified work, counsel the employee to bid on jobs of such type if they become available. (N.B. It is inadvisable to "build" a job around an employee's incapacitates particularly in a unionized environment. The onus should be on the employee to apply for an existing position within his/her capabilities).

4. Discharge

Only when all the previously noted needs and conditions have been met and everything has been done to accommodate the employee can termination be considered. An Arbitrator would consider the following in ruling on an innocent absenteeism dismissal case.
1. Has the employee done everything possible to regain their health and return to work?
2. Has the employer provided every assistance possible? (i.e. counseling, support, time off.)
3. Has the employer informed the employee of the unworkable situation resulting from their sickness?
4. Has the employer attempted to accommodate the employee by offering a more suitable position (if available) or a reduction of hours?
5. Has enough time elapsed to allow for every possible chance of recovery?
6. Has the employer treated the employee prejudicially in any way?

   As is evident, a great deal of time and effort must elapse before dismissal can take place.

   These points would be used to substantiate or disprove the following two fold test.
   1. The absences must be shown to be clearly excessive.
   2. It must be proven that the employee will be unable to attend work on a regular basis in the future.

**Corrective Action for Culpable Absenteeism**

As already indicated, culpable absenteeism consists of absences where it can be demonstrated that the employee is not actually ill and is able to improve his/her attendance. Presuming you have communicated attendance expectations generally, have identified the employee as a problem, have met with him/her as part of your attendance program, made your concerns on his specific absenteeism known and have offered counselling as appropriate, with no improvement despite your positive efforts, disciplinary procedures may be appropriate.

The procedures for corrective/progressive discipline for culpable absenteeism are generally the same as for other progressive discipline problems. The discipline should not be prejudicial in any way. The general procedure is as follows: [Utilizing counselling memorandum]

1. Initial Warning(s)
2. Written Warning(s)
3. Suspension(s)
4. Discharge
- **Verbal Warning**
  Formally meet with the employee and explain that income protection is to be used only when an employee is legitimately ill. Advise the employee that his/her attendance record must improve and be maintained at an improved level or further disciplinary action will result. Offer any counselling or guidance as is appropriate. Give further verbal warnings as required. Review the employee's income protection records at regular intervals. Where a marked improvement has been shown, commend the employee. Where there is no improvement a written warning should be issued.

- **Written Warning**
  Interview the employee again. Show him/her the statistics and point out that there has been no noticeable (or sufficient) improvement. Listen to the employee to see if there is a valid reason and offer any assistance you can. If no satisfactory explanation is given, advise the employee that he/she will be given a written warning. Be specific in discussion with him/her and in the counselling memorandum as to the type of action to be taken and when it will be taken if the record does not improve. As soon as possible after this meeting provide the employee personally with the written warning and place a copy of his/her file. The written warning should identify any noticeable pattern. If the amount and/or pattern continue, the next step in progressive discipline may be a second, stronger written warning.

- **Suspension** (only after consultation with the appropriate superiors)
  If the problem of culpable absenteeism persists, following the next interview period and immediately following an absence, the employee should be interviewed and advised that he/she is to be suspended. The length of the suspension will depend again on the severity of the problem, the credibility of the employee's explanation, the employee's general work performance and length of service. Subsequent suspensions are optional depending on the above condition.

- **Dismissal** (only after consultation with the appropriate superiors)
  Dismissals should only be considered when all of the above conditions and procedures have been met. The employee, upon displaying no satisfactory
improvement, would be dismissed on the grounds of his/her unwillingness to correct his/her absence record.

2.5.1 Reducing and Managing Workplace Absenteeism

Productivity loss due to absenteeism is a serious and growing challenge. In the United States, the annual cost to employers for time lost due to accidents is almost $100 billion, and other unscheduled worker absences costs even more. Absence management is a growing body of knowledge and experience that managers apply to the control and reduction of these costs.

2.5.2 Most effective ways of measuring the effects of absenteeism

- **Create a Policy**
  What constitutes the “best” absence management policy will, of course, change from organization to organization, but when you draw up a policy, you should aim to:
  - balance concern for cost with concern for people
  - keep your employees up to speed
  - collect quality information

- **Balance Corporate and Human Values**
  The value of an absence management policy, if well-conceived and followed, is increased productivity and profit for the company. However, the policy must reflect human values of fairness and respect, and management’s duty of care for employees. Rather than focusing on policing the policy, and suggesting that people are malingers, hypochondriacs, or cheats, successful approaches to minimizing absenteeism emphasize care, positive thinking, and shared responsibility. The policy should be concerned principally with managing the effects of absence from genuine sickness, while acknowledging that some absences by a distinct minority of employees may be suspect or exaggerated.

- **Communicate for Effectiveness**
  Effective programs communicate to employees the objectives of the policy and how it will be applied. Discussions with staff should be about presence, rather than absence, and the avenues your organization makes available to help them get well. Depending on the nature of the absence, benefits and services you offer might include counselling, job retraining, job sharing, extended sick leave, and so
on. Remember that federal and state laws are designed to help employees truly in need, and your policies need to be complementary with those laws.

- **Gather & Analyze Facts**

  To effectively manage absenteeism, it’s essential that you know what you’re dealing with, both in terms of overall levels of absence and the patterns shown by specific individuals and groups.

  In analysing your information, differentiate between regular days off, frequent short-term absences, and long-term absence—each may need a quite different approach for corrective action. Supervisors and HR staff should develop skills for discussing absence with employees, not in an adversarial way, but as a means of spotting problems and offering help early. They should also observe patterns of absence and behaviour, and particularly developing noting changes in such patterns. Records should be maintained. Factual information is your first-line of attack. When managers and others show that they’re interested and will follow up with individuals with high rates of absenteeism, “sickness” rates almost always decline.

- **Get People Back to Work**

  The purpose of your absence/presence program must be to get the person with numerous absences back to his or her work as soon as is reasonable. This is especially the case after a prolonged absence, when it will be important to maintain the relationship with the person and help him or her to become productive again. The possibilities for modified or transitional roles to help the employee back into work should be looked at very carefully.

  When dealing with an associate returning to work after an extended absence, put together a team of people—including the person who’s been absent—to address the issue, as medical and occupational health information will have to be considered alongside working conditions and perhaps legal requirements. The supervisor plays a key role in maintaining contact with the person and identifying suitable transitional work during their recovery and return.
2.5.3 PREVENTIVE MECHANISM TO MINIMIZE THE ABSENTEEISM:-

- Tips for Managing and Reducing Employee Absenteeism
- Beyond legal compliance, there are steps employers can take to better manage or reduce employee absenteeism. Here are a few tips:
- Be sure attendance expectations are clearly set. Some absences and tardiness can be attributed to simple misunderstandings about the time work should begin. The solution may be as simple as creating a clear attendance policy if one does not already exist. Setting expectations also requires clear communications about the policy and the repercussions of absences.
- It’s also important to decide the level of tracking the organization deems necessary regarding absences. For example, will every absence be tracked and the reason noted? Will tardiness count against the employee’s allowed absences, or will tardiness be handled separately?
- Enforce the attendance policy consistently. This is more difficult than it sounds. It can be tempting to allow more absences than the attendance policy outlines when employees are facing difficult situations. While an employer is, of course, free to do so, it’s better to have a policy that has flexibility built into it so that it can be implemented consistently and not incite claims of favoritism or discrimination when it’s applied differently for different individuals.
- This issue is especially hard to control across different managers or different divisions. One manager may be more lenient on recording tardiness and absences, for example, while another may be “by the book” on all matters, which can lead to resentment if employees see this inconsistent behavior. All supervisors and managers should be trained on how to implement the attendance policy consistently.
- Ensure all employees know what to do when they need to be late or miss a day. Workers should know when and who to call and what information needs to be provided. They should also understand what documentation, if any, they will be required to provide to the employer upon return (e.g., a doctor’s note).
- Assess the amount of paid time off that is allowed. Is it enough for most employees to handle all of their no work obligations and stay physically and mentally healthy? If not, a first step in reducing unplanned absences may be to
allow more planned absences. While this may not reduce the total time away from work, it can reduce the unplanned nature of employee call-outs when employees feel empowered and able to schedule enough absences without penalty (i.e., they don’t have to call in sick for something that is not an illness).

- Consider implementing programs designed to improve employee wellness. For example, in addition to standard employee wellness programs, a business might include employee assistance programs (EAPs) or other initiatives aimed at reducing stress or helping employees in some other capacity.
- Ensure managers understand that absences often come at times that employees are experiencing hardships. Compassion can go a long way.
- Remember that employees may need assistance getting back to work. This might include light-duty options or the option to work from home during the transition, for example.
- Work to keep employees motivated and engaged. Satisfied employees are less likely to abuse an absence policy.
- Consider rewarding good attendance. Be sure not to penalize those who have taken protected leave, but consider implementing rewards that encourage good attendance practices, as these can be good motivators. This can even be as simple as providing positive feedback and encouragement to employees with good attendance.
- Consider changing schedules when appropriate to accommodate differing employee needs. Sometimes a small schedule change can eliminate problems.
- Absenteeism affects the organization from multiple angles. It severely affects the production process and the business process. The effect of unauthorized absenteeism is more compared other types of absenteeism. However, it would be difficult to completely avoid absenteeism. The management can minimize absenteeism.

2.5.4 The following measures are useful in controlling or minimizing absenteeism.

1) Selecting the employees by testing them thoroughly regarding their aspirations value systems, responsibility and sensitiveness.
2) Adopting a humanistic approach in dealing with the personal problems of employees.
3) Following or proactive approach in identifying and redressing employee grievances.
4) Providing hygienic working conditions.
5) Providing welfare measures and fringe benefits, balancing the need for the employee and the ability of the organization.
6) Providing high salary and allowances based on the organizational financial positions.
7) Impressing the communication network particularly the upward communication.
8) Providing leave facility based on the needs of the employees and institutional requirement.
9) Providing safety & health measures.
10) Providing cordial human relations & institutional relations.
11) Educating the employees
12) Counseling the employees about their carrier, income & expenditure habits & culture.
13) Free flow of information, exchanging of ideas problems etc. between subordinate & superior.
14) Granting leave and financial assistance liberally in case of sickness of employee & his family members.
15) Offering attendance bonus & inducements.
16) Providing extensive training, encouragement, special allowance in cash for technological advancements.

2.6 ORGANISATIONS INITIATIVES OF MANAGING ABSENTEEISM:-

Absenteeism is a serious problem for management because it involves heavy additional expenses. The management should take the following measures to reduce the rate of absenteeism:

**The Return-to-Work Interview**- The training of supervisors in how to best manage absenteeism should include instruction on how to conduct effective and fair return-to-work interviews. Recent national surveys indicate that these interviews are regarded as one of the most effective tools for managing short-term absenteeism.
**Employee Assistance Program**- Employees become frequently absent from work due to personal problems so the company can take initiative by providing employee assistance programs.

**Sickness Reporting** – Tell employees that they must phone in as early as possible to advise why they are unable to make it to work and when they expect to return.

**Return to Work Interview**- When an employee returns to work then ensure that they have a ‘return to work interview’ and routine enquiry must be done.

**Medical care program** - The management can provide advanced medical care program at least twice in a year for the health care of the workers.

**Attendance incentives** - The attendance incentives may be raised a little to motivate the employees regularity.

**Induction programme for the family members** – The family members of the worker should also clearly inform about the loss the worker incurs due to his frequent absence for work. The management can also make the family members to actively cooperate in making the worker attend work regularly. This can be done by introducing a scheme which provides every year gifts, some home appliances, or some valuable things, for every worker’s family, who attend for work for a specified number of days in a year.

**Disciplinary action** - Some strict action could be taken on those workers who avail more than 2 days leave without any justifiable reasons.

**Motivation programmes**- conducting some games for the employees once in a month or taking the employees for some entertainment trip will help in motivating and retaining the employees. This will also help in reducing the stress level of the employees.

**Attendance policy**

An organizational policy on attendance provides a clear statement of the objectives and principles by which attendance will be promoted within an organization. The policy statement is an important communication tool to assist managers, supervisors and employees to understand their roles and responsibilities. The following are suggested as desirable components of an attendance policy.

1. Define the objectives, acknowledging the importance of attendance in productivity, workplace morale, and the physical and social work environment.
2. State the value and importance of individuals to the workplace.

3. Define responsible officers and line management responsibility.

4. Define application in terms of work areas or workgroups.

5. Procedures for absence notification - responsible officer. (It is preferable to use the worker’s supervisor for this function).

6. Define acceptable and non-acceptable attendance.

7. Absence follow up:
   a. informal contact procedures
   b. formal contact procedures
   c. problem solving resources
   d. protocols for independent medical referral

8. Procedures for long-term absences should be different from those used for short-term absences.


10. Leave provisions, entitlements and definitions.

11. Define leave approval mechanisms and decision latitude.

12. Specific initiatives to deal with causes.

13. Procedures for grievance resolution.


15. Regular policy review

**Absence Monitoring Systems**

The measurement of absence is fundamental to identifying problems, developing solutions and monitoring the success of absence control strategies. Computer based absence reporting systems can provide data so that absence rates can be measured on an ongoing basis as an important indicator of overall human resource performance. This can provide feedback on the success of intervention strategies. In addition, monitoring systems can assist with the identification of employees who are frequently absent for individual management attention.

**Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP’s)**

The goal of employer sponsored support systems is to assist workforce members to deal with personal, family and work issues, and consequently to participate fully and productively at the workplace. Professional counselors, provided to employees on a
voluntary and confidential basis, perform such services. Employee Assistance Programmes usually offer counseling to assist with a wide range of problems including:

- workplace problems: including harassment, violence, conflict and re-structuring
- problems at home including relationship problems, illness and drug/alcohol problems.

Employers should seek to maximize the gains possible to them through the use of EAP’s. EAP involvement may be severely limited by capitation based fees and employers need to consider the value adding that may occur with the use of a professional and skilled EAP provider. The quality of their input and impact is dependent on service experience and expertise. One of the drawbacks with EAP’s is the low utilization rate primarily through lack of referral and under promotion, however, cost factors, attractiveness and willingness to participate are also critical.

**Rehabilitation**

The value of promoting an early return to work following work related injury has been well recognized. The same principles can be applied to employees suffering illness or injury due to any cause. In some cases and particularly in prolonged absences a comprehensive assessment may lead to the development of an effective rehabilitation programme or workplace intervention. Larger organisations often have internal resources dedicated to provision of rehabilitation services that can be utilized, however similar organisations or complex cases may require the use of Rehabilitation professionals.

**Health Promotion and Wellness programmes**

These programmes have an intuitive attractiveness given the substantial contribution of factors such as smoking, alcohol and drug use, lifestyle and infectious agents have on work absence. Effective strategies have been demonstrated for cardiovascular risk factors, smoking cessation, relaxation training, stress management and physical fitness. The latter three appear to have the more direct effect on absenteeism.

**Supervisory and Management Training**

Virtually all major reviews of the literature have demonstrated a consistent relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism. Management and supervisory
factors contribute significantly to the development of job satisfaction. Workplace structure and organisation is also highlighted in the econometric model. The development of work group cohesion, consultative and participatory decision management strategies, provision of feedback and the importance of valuing employees are important long term strategies in workplace development. Supervisory practices which lead to a more open expression of opinion and participatory problem solving, may result in reduced ambiguity, role conflict and stress and increased job satisfaction, with a consequent reduction in absenteeism. Gray-Toft PA, Anderson JG.(1985)

Rewards
There are a number of potential problems which arise from the use of incentives. They are usually differential, often poorly targeted so as not to achieve improved attendance in high frequency leave takers. Sickness and injury may be concealed which may result in reduced productivity, increased risk to workplace health and safety, errors or disease transmission. This may also discourage the early detection and treatment of illness. It is possible that such incentives may actually encourage absences when the perceived benefit is small, remote or defaulted. Rebound absenteeism after the cessation of such programmes has been frequently noted. The cashing in of sick leave, that is the redemption of sick leave for full or part full pay, is often promoted as a solution to absenteeism. This can operate as an effective incentive for leave avoidance, though it effectively penalises those employees unfortunate enough to become ill, and is seen by some as being inconsistent with the premise upon which sick leave was based. Some organisations have accumulated significant long-term financial burdens as a result of full sick leave redemption programmes.

Issues to consider include:

- Little evidence of long term effects.
- Relatively expensive to administer.
- May not be supported by employee organisations.
- May potentially discriminate against those unluckily ill.
- Contrary to the original concept of sick leave as an insurance against ill-health.
• Financial rewards may need to be meaningful to be effective.
• Should involve a full cost benefit assessment.

**Penalties**

Where the cost of job loss is perceived to be low, work non-attendance is thought to be more likely.

Some research has suggested that dismissal threat is a very effective tool for absence control. **Balchin J, Wooden M. (1992)** Relative to positive incentives, penalties, sanctions or progressive discipline may give rise to adverse outcomes such as workplace conflict, reduced morale, reduced productivity and tense working relations. The effect of an intervention on the whole of an organisation needs to be considered. Reduced absenteeism at the expense of employee morale, turnover, productivity or disputation may see overall costs increase. Counseling systems for under performing and poor performing employees need to be well constructed and supported with clearly understood processes for management, supervisors and employees. Mixed consequence systems combining progressive assessment with problem solving have had some success. Systems developed in agreement with the workforce are likely to be more successful.

**Grievance Procedures**

Grievance procedures have an important place in addressing workplace conflict. Workplace grievances appear to have a direct association with increased absenteeism particularly in the short term. Such grievances may generate sufficiently felt inequity to concurrently generate grievance action and withdrawal in the form of absenteeism. Developing procedures to deal with disputes including consultative and participatory mechanisms may intercede in this process. Opportunities should be developed to provide effective occupational health and safety committees or consultative committees with sufficient training and commitment to create open channels of communication. **Klaas BS, Heneman HG, Olson C.A.(1991).**
References:


